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Author(s): V. Minorsky

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Geographical Factors in Persian Art

By V. Minorsky

I. Introduction

THE connection of Art with Geography is obvious, but in the case of Persia the problem is somewhat different from that presented by other countries.[1]

For example, the most immediate influence of the natural environment on the landscape painters is hardly of any importance in Persia, where the miniaturists present their heroes in purely imaginary surroundings, now of radiant sunny spaces, now of fantastic rocks reminding one of coral reefs.

Very rarely, as in Muḥammadī's works (sixteenth century), does one see a clearly Iranian corner, somewhere on the Caspian shore, with small terraces of fields clinging to the steep slopes of crowded mountains, ploughmen walking after their zebus,[2] gay magpies rocking on the slender tops of cypresses, goats gathering to the piping of a herdsman, ragged and hirsute. We shall nearly have exhausted local traits when we have mentioned the stately plane-trees towering over scenes of audiences and garden parties. Later, when nature painting became realistic under the brush of Muḥammad Zamān [3] it merely borrowed the details from the Italian landscapes, to present Bahrām Gōr as a St. George galloping under some Florentine hills.

Persian architects had undoubtedly a subtle decorative feeling. Apart from the details, they knew the value of the bright spots of domes burning amid deserts as enormous golden candles, or soothing the traveller's eye with their intense blue. The builders depended chiefly on material of the same shade as the surrounding nature, and indeed white marbles, having travelled far from their congenial

[1] The present article, completed in December 1931, was intended for a larger circle of readers not necessarily consisting of professional orientalists. Its object lies not so much in details as in a general outline of the problem. The facts which have become available since 1931 have been referred to in footnotes.

[2] Zebus are found in Persia principally in the Caspian provinces. This is an important detail for locating Muḥammadī's activities, though by birth he seems to have been a native of Tabrīz or Herat, cf. Sir T. Arnold, *Painting in Islam*, pp. 135, 144. [The idea that Muḥammadī was a Chinese convert (!) is entirely arbitrary. According to 'Ālī's *Menāqib-i hünerverān*, p. 64, note 3, "Muhammadī beg" was the son of Sultan Muḥammad Tabrīzī.]

[3] *V.i.*, p. 640.

sea, would not look to advantage among the grey and yellow tones of the Iranian highlands. Perhaps it would not be impossible to use in Persia stones of different colours, but, with a true instinct, the architects shunned any mauresque extravagance, better suited to more exotic skies and climes.[1]

These few points exhaust the immediate influence of natural environment on Persian Art. As in Persian poetry, so in painting and the plastic arts, this influence has been very limited and quite subordinated to imaginative and decorative elements.

Perhaps the "nature" which most appealed to the Persian artist was that arranged in gardens. Planned parks, to judge by their name [2] were a Persian invention. Directly connected with them was the special architecture of pavilions known at least since the Sasanian times.[3] But the gardens themselves are an important subject both for textiles and miniatures.

Most illuminating in this connection is the description of the carpet which the Arabs in A.D. 637 captured at the Sasanian capital Ctesiphon: "The carpet (*qiṭf*) was 60 cubits (*dhira'*) by 60 cubits, in one piece (measuring in all) one jarīb. On it were panels (roads) as if (representing) banks (*sawr*), and precious stones as if (representing) canals, the interstices between them (representing) as if dwellings (*diyar*). The border was like cultivated ground covered with plants at spring time, made of silk, with stems of gold and flowers of gold, silver, and the like." [4]

II. Persia's Cultural Centres

From these general remarks on the interdependence of Art and

[1] The only place with buildings in white and red stone seems to be the small defile above the Kurdish district of Somai (north-west of Urmia). These curious monuments have an immediate parallel on the Turkish side of the frontier in the castle of Khoshāb. See my article "Somai," in *EI*. Stones of two colours are characteristic of the Armenian architecture.

[2] Avestan *pairi-daēza* "surrounded by wall", Persian *palēz* "garden", Greek παράδεισος, European "paradise" and Arabic *firdaus*.

[3] See the reconstruction of the Qaṣr-i Shīrīn buildings in de Morgan, *Mission Scientifique en Perse*, iv, Recherches archéologiques, ii, pp. 341–360, the Safavid pavilions in Isfahān, Ashraf, and Faraḥābād, the Qājār buildings in the parks around Tehrān, etc.

[4] Ṭabarī, i, p. 2452. The carpet was sent to Mekka and there cut to pieces; a similar fate later befell the Persian imperial banner Dirafsh-i Kāviyānī. Some words in the text are dubious: *quḍbān* has been translated as "stems" but, on a high authority, I hear that it may be rendered by "chain" (as opposed to "warp"); if instead of *diyar* we read *dayr* (monastery) it may be an echo of the Arab view according to which Christian monasteries were very pleasant abodes.

Geography, understood as the natural environment of the artist, we now pass to the more practical question of the places round which Persian art arose and grew. Art always gravitates to political centres. In our case, a study of artistic topography is rendered particularly useful by two conspicuous features of the history of Persia, namely by the plurality of its capitals and the constant shifting of the principal seat of the government. Our survey will be based chiefly on architectural remains, and this not only because they are the best witnesses of town life, but also because the construction of an important building necessitates a collaboration of artists representing many different branches of Art.

1.

Spiegel has defined Iran as the country between the Indus and the Tigris. The weak point of this definition is that it ignores the northern extension of the Iranian lands which once comprised many territories of the later Turkestan, and extended beyond the northern shore of the Caspian to the Northern Caucasus and the South Russian steppes.

Only in Achæmenid, and in a much lesser degree in Parthian and Sasanian, times was the majority of the Iranian lands united under one rule. But even then Iran had no such centre as Rome in Italy or Paris in France. The Achæmenids in their seasonal movements travelled between Persepolis, Ecbatana, and Susa, where their great monuments are actually found. Outside this roughly outlined triangle only inscriptions of secondary importance or productions of provincial art are known.

The Parthian Arsacids were associated by their origin and dialect principally with the north-eastern marches [1] and with the north of Persia generally, but their easy overthrow by the Sasanians is chiefly explained by the excessive decentralization of their empire and their neglect of purely Persian affairs. The Parthians were irresistibly drawn westwards. Their monuments lie in the westernmost part of Persia near the Zagros (Bīsutūn, Sarpul) and in Mesopotamia (Hatra, Jazīrat ibn-'Omar, Assur, Boshat near Mayyafāriqīn, Dura-Europos, etc.).

The Sasanians sprang from Fārs. Their ancestors, connected with local sanctuaries and local dynasties, had transmitted to them a

[1] The royal tombs of the early Parthians lay in Nasā on the northern slope of the Khorasanian mountains; see my translation of the *Ḥudūd al-'Ālam*, p. 326.

personal pride in the province and its antiquities. Most of the Sasanian sculptures are found in Fārs, often in the immediate proximity of the Achæmenid monuments. The neighbouring western provinces (Khūzistān, the Bakhtiyārī country, Luristān) are covered with great engineering works of the Sasanian kings (roads, bridges). But as the trend of Sasanian politics was also towards the west, a number of Sasanian monuments adorned the royal road leading from the centre of Media to Mesopotamia ; a Sasanian bas-relief used to exist close to Rayy ; at three farsakhs' distance from Hamadān, at Juhasta (?) there stood a magnificent castle commemorating Bahrām Gōr's exploits [1] ; the famous Tāq-i-bustān bas-reliefs are carved on the western side of the Bīsutūn rock ; the hunting castles of Qaṣr-i Shīrīn and Haush-Kurrak, as well as the summer resort Daskara (near Shahraban), were also situated on the hills immediately above the Mesopotamian plains.

It is a matter of particular moment for the development of Persia culture and art that for 950 years the great administrative centre of the two Middle Persian kingdoms (Arsacid and Sasanian) was Seleucia-Ctesiphon which stood on the banks of the Tigris, right in the cultural focus of Mesopotamia, where the population was Semitic and the civilization mixed and full of reminiscences of ancient times.

2.

After the Arab conquest, the capital of the caliphate moved from Mekka to Kūfa, then to the far off Damascus and finally to Baghdād, close to the former Ctesiphon. In Persia, the Arabs had to base their power on local centres among which Rayy and Isfahān were prominent. Rayy must have been greatly arabicized though the population was mostly Iranian.[2] The 'Abbāsid Mahdi, when heir apparent, built the city anew. Harūn al-Rashīd was born in Rayy and ever remembered with admiration its beautiful main street. As to Isfahān, 750 years before Shāh-'Abbās, the 'Abbāsid caliph Mutawakkil [3] had already conceived the idea of making of it the capital of his empire, and the project was abandoned only on account of the protest of its inhabitants, who had probably reason to apprehend too intimate an intercourse with the court.

[1] Ibn al-Faqīh, p. 255, *v.i.*, p. 650, n. 2.

[2] Ya'qūbī, *Bibl. Geogr. Arab.*, vii, p. 276, states that the inhabitants were a mixture of non-Arabs (*'ajam*), the Arabs being very few in Rayy. The contrary affirmation in Schwarz, 760, is a slip. See now my article " Raiy " in *EI.*

[3] Ibn Rusta, p. 156.

Out of ninety-two buildings which Herzfeld [1] enumerates in Persia before A.D. 1000 the following admit of a further classification.

Built by the Arabs, forty buildings, and by the people more or less associated with them—thirteen. These constructions are scattered all over Persia. Associated with the Ṭāhirids are two buildings (in Khorasan), with the Ṣaffārids—seven (Khorasan, Sīstān, Fārs Khūzistān), with the Sāmānids directly and indirectly—seven (east); with the Būyids—sixteen (south and west).

The effect of this table, which according to the author himself (*o.l.*, p. 148) does not pretend to be exhaustive, would be incomparably more decisive in favour of the eastern part of Persia, had not Khorasan been treated separately from Transoxiana.

3.

This country of old Iranian culture, situated between the Oxus and the Jaxartes, was designated in the legendary Persian tradition by the misleading term *Tūrān*, which later, by a sort of phonetic calembour, became associated with the *Turks*. No less a person than the great national poet Firdausi was in a great measure responsible for this substitution, for he was too vividly impressed by the misfortune which the Sāmānids had suffered at the hands of the recent Turkish invaders. But even for the Arab geographers of the tenth century Transoxiana, designated by the special term *Mā warā' an-nahr* i.e. "the Land beyond the river Oxus," was distinct from the properly Turkish lands stretching east of the Jaxartes between the Muslim possessions and China.[2]

In the history of Persian art it is impossible to disregard the pre-Islamic and early Islamic epoch in Transoxiana, which for a considerable time was the cultural centre influencing Khorasan and other Persian lands.

Till the times of the Sāmānid prince Aḥmad ibn Nūḥ ibn Naṣr (second half of the tenth century) there stood in Farakhshah (one day's march from Bukhārā) a celebrated castle of the former dynasty of the Bukhār-khudāts. Aḥmad used its wood for his constructions.[3] In Kushāniya (actually Kashan-ata) there was a building with pictures

[1] "Khorasan, Denkmalsgeographische Studien zur Kulturgeschichte des Islam in Iran," in *Der Islam*, xi, 1921.

[2] See my article "Tūrān" in *EI.*

[3] Narshakhi, *History of Bukhara*, ed. Schefer, pp. 15–16. Russian translation by Lykoshin-Barthold, Tashkent, 1897.

of the sovereigns of China, the Turks, Persia, Rome, and the Hindu Brahmans.[1] In Arfūd (later called Ṭawāwis, half-way between Bukhārā and Samarqand) a temple of fire-worshippers and an idol-temple (of Buddhists) peacefully co-existed side by side. In Rāmush too a temple of idol-worshippers survived till the Sāmānid times.[2]

4.

In Bukhara the first mosque was built by Qutaiba in 713 on the site of the former temple of the idolators (Buddhists ?). The new cathedral mosque was erected by Yaḥyā al-Barmakī in 794. In 902 the Sāmānid Ismā'īl enlarged it, in 918 a minaret was added to it by the vazir Jayhānī. Burnt down in 1068, it was restored in 1069 with a new miḥrāb carved at Samarqand. In 959 the vazir 'Utbī built a mosque close to Rīgistān. The Sāmānid Ismā'īl's palace stood on the canal Jūy-i Mūliyān,[3] that of Naṣr on the Rīgistān place, that of Manṣur (967) near the New Gate in Kārak-i 'Alawiyān. Under 951 the construction of a building by Nūḥ ibn Naṣr is mentioned and in 971 Manṣūr built a new place for festival services at a distance of half a farsakh from the citadel.

Early Moslem buildings[4] in Samarqand were an old palace of the Arab amīrs, a prison, a cathedral mosque, a castle of Rāfi' ibn Layth, a tomb of the Prophet's cousin Qutham ibn 'Abbās, later known under the popular name of Shāh-zinda.[5] Under the Sāmānids Samarqand, according to Barthold,[6] could easily have had a population of 500,000.

Among the other towns of Transoxiana, there were mosques, mostly cathedral, in the following places: Balkh, Kālif, Zāmīn, Firabr, Navīda, Panjīkath, Wadhār (built by the Arab Abū Muzāḥim Subā' ibn al-Naḍr).

Just as the mighty impulse given by the **Sāmānids** to Persian poetry and historiography had echoed all over Persia, it would be incomprehensible if Transoxiana, the seat of a powerful dynasty which often occupied Rayy, had had no direct effect on Persian, and

[1] Chavannes, *Documents sur les T'ou-kioue*, St. Pétersbourg, 1903, p. 145.

[2] For all these places see Barthold, *Turkestan*, ed. Gibb Memorial.

[3] Properly *Jūy-i Maulāyan*.

[4] The quarries which furnished stone for the city buildings in Samarqand and the clay for the preparation of vessels, glass, and depilatory stuffs, were situated at Kuhak, Iṣṭakhrī, p. 318.

[5] See its description by Ibn Baṭṭūṭa (1355), iii, 52–4, Barthold, *o.l.*, p. 92.

[6] Ibid., p. 88.

in the first place on Khorasanian, architecture, even if it is admitted that the Sāmānids themselves had been considerably influenced by Samarrā. The only building of the Sāmānid times still standing in Bukhārā, viz. the mausoleum of the amīr Ismā'īl (d. 295/907), is of a rather peculiar style unknown in Persia,[1] and we can hardly expect that this particular building exhausted all the types of the numerous contemporary buildings that have now disappeared.

The influence of Bukhārā must also have been considerable on the production of textiles. According to Narshakhī (who wrote in A.D. 943),[2] a famous manufactory (*kārgāh, bayt al-ṭirāz*), standing near the cathedral mosque in Bukhārā,[3] produced carpets (*bisāṭ*), door-hangings (*shādravān*),[4] as well as yazdī-textiles, cushions (*bālish*), prayer-rugs (*muṣallā*) and the striped fabrics used at the inns (*burdī-yi funduqī* ?), for the use of the caliph. "The kharāj (land-taxes) of Bukhārā was spent exclusively on big carpets, as every year a special agent came from Baghdād and whatever was the sum of the kharāj, he took in its stead those textiles (*jāma*)." Narshakhī, or perhaps his continuator, adds that the manufactory had then a set-back, and the masters specially trained for this work deserted Bukhārā. No such products were woven in any of the cities of Khorasan, and even when the specialists formerly resident in Bukhārā went to Khorasan and prepared there the necessary implements, they could not weave textiles of the same splendour (*āb-u-raunaq*). Formerly there was not a king, or a prince, or a chief, or an employee who had not such textiles, which were made in red, white, and green colours. Merchants used to export them to Syria, Egypt and the Byzantine cities. At the time of the composition of the book the cotton stuff (*karbās*) produced in the village Zandana [5] and therefrom called *zandanijī*, had become much more generally known than those old Bukhārā textiles.[6]

[1] Umniakov, *Architectural Monuments of Central Asia* (in Russian), Tashkent, 1929, pp. 4, 17; Cohn-Wiener, *Turan*, 1930, pl. 1–3.

[2] Ed. Schefer, p. 18.

[3] It seems to have still been there in 1178 when the abridgment of Narshakhī, which alone has come down to us, was compiled.

[4] Markwart, *A Catalogue of the Provincial Capitals of Ērānšhahr*, Rome, 1931, p. 73, explains *shādravān* as "portière" (from **Shāh-dar-pān* "protecting the door of the king").

[5] Zandana is situated four farsakhs north of Bukhārā. The stuff *zandanijī* was later manufactured in other villages of Bukhārā, and exported to 'Irāq, Fārs, Kirmān, and India. The *zandanijī* seems to have been of a common quality, as the grooms, who were slaves, wore garments made of it, Barthold, *Turkestan*, p. 227.

[6] See also a long list which Muqaddasī, pp. 323–6, gives of the articles exported from Transoxiana.

5.

Following the renaissance in Transoxiana and Khorasan, other provinces lying more to the west began their emancipation.

In the Caspian provinces, in the district of Gurgān there still stands a tower of Qābūs ibn Vushmagīr, of the **Ziyārid** dynasty which occupied an area intermediate between the Sāmānids and the Būyids.[1] This tower, built in A.D. 1006–7,[2] seems to be the oldest architectural monument standing intact in Persia and, if one remembers the close connection of Qābūs with the Sāmānids one cannot help thinking that the striking originality of this building may be accounted for simply by the disappearance of other similar buildings of the Sāmānids.

The Rādkān tower standing on the river Nikā west of Astarābād was finished in 411 (A.D. 1020–1) by the Ispahbad Abū Ja'far Muhammad ibn Vandarīn of the local **Bāvand** dynasty which had maintained its rights since the Sasanian times, but at the date in question was eclipsed by the Ziyārids.[3] The building resembles that of Gurgān and is particularly interesting on account of its Middle Persian inscription.[4]

West of the Ziyārids rose the **Būyid** dynasty, the importance of which has not yet found adequate recognition.[5] From their mountain fastness of Daylam the Būyids spread over all the Persian lands, except the north-east, and dominated Mesopotamia. For the first time the shī'a was proclaimed the official creed of a great reigning dynasty and the Iranian heretics became guards and protectors of the caliph himself. The great centres of the different branches of the dynasty were Shīrāz, Rayy, and Baghdād. The assumption of the ancient title *shāhinshāh* ("King of Kings") by the Būyids shows how they clung to the past. Very curious is the oldest Muslim inscription in Persia, which 'Aḍid [6] al-daula, following the example

[1] Qābūs depended on the Sāmānids and later on the Ghaznavids. His relations with the Būyids were strained. See C. Huart, *Les Ziyārides*, Paris, 1922, pp. 52–63.

[2] The original date is 375 in the solar era (i.e. as shown by van Berchem, the Yazdagird era) and 397 in the lunar era (i.e. the Hijra era), both corresponding to A.D. 1006. See Diez, *Churasanische Baudenkmäler*, Berlin, 1918, p. 106.

[3] See Godard in *Āthār-é Īrān*, i/1, p. 115.

[4] The inscription has been deciphered by Herzfeld, *Mitteilungen aus Iran*, iv, 1932, p. 140–7. Recently two other similar towers have been found in Māzandarān, at Lajīm and Resget (Raz-gat ?), and described by A. Godard, *Āthār-é Īrān*, i, 1936, pp. 125–160. For the decipherment of the Middle Persian inscription of Lājīm see Herzfeld, *Mitteilungen*, viii/2, 1936, pp. 78–81.

[5] I tried to elucidate the historical meaning of this "Iranian intermezzo" in my *La Domination des Daïlamites*, Paris, 1932.

[6] In Persia the name is pronounced with *i*, not with *u* (*'Adud*).

of the Sasanians, caused to be engraved at Persepolis in 344/955; in it he says that the ancient (Sasanian ?) inscriptions of that place were interpreted to him by a secretary and a Zoroastrian priest (*mobad*).[1] In the neighbourhood of the Muslim Iṣṭakhr, which sprang up near the site of Persepolis, stands 'Adid al-daula's famous dyke. Muqaddasī, p. 449, becomes quite lyrical in describing the monarch's palace in Shīrāz with its 360 rooms [2] and its wonderful library where all the known books of the time were gathered. The same author, while explaining that the pyramids in Egypt were originally tombs (p. 210), makes *en passant* a highly interesting remark: "Behold the Daylamite kings (i.e. the Būyids) at Rayy, who build over their tombs lofty domes (*qubab 'āliya*), which they construct with all their zeal and erect to their utmost ability, lest they decay, while those who are under the kings build smaller (domes)." Other Būyid monuments are scattered over Fārs, Khūzistān, Mesopotamia, and Kirmān.[3]

Very little is yet known concerning the monuments of some prosperous smaller dynasties which asserted their independence under the ægis, or behind the screen, of the Sāmānids in the east, and the Būyids in the west: the **Abū-Dāvūdids** of Balkh, the **Muḥtājids** of Chaghāniyān (south-east of Bukhārā), the **Farīghūnids** of Gūzgān (west of Balkh) on the one hand, and the **Musāfirids** of Tārom,[4] the **Rawwādids** of Tabrīz and Marāgha,[5] the **Ḥasanwaihids** of Kurdistān on the other.[6]

6.

The Turks who founded independent kingdoms from the end of the tenth century onwards gradually did away with the Iranian

[1] S. de Sacy, *Mémoires sur diverses antiquités de la Perse*, Paris, 1793, p. 137.

[2] Muqaddasī, p. 450: Some of the rooms were imitating the colour (*laun*) of Chinese porcelain (*al-ghadar al-ṣīnī*), others that of rock, some were panelled with marble (*mafrūsh bil-rukhām*), some gilt over, some covered with paintings (*muṣawwar*).

[3] To that dynasty also were probably due several buildings in Qazvīn, Qum, Abhar, Isfahān, Dīnavar, Nihāvand, etc., mentioned by Arab geographers, Herzfeld, *o.l.*, pp. 166–7.

[4] Great wonders are told about Muḥammad b. Musāfir's buildings in the castle of Shamīrān, where he attracted the best artisans from everywhere. The castle stood on the Safīd-rūd, at a distance of some three hours above the Manjīl bridge. See my article "Tarom" in *EI*. I now see that Häntzsche, in Brugsch, *Reise*, ii, 471–2, has given a description of the ruins, without knowing what the place was.

[5] See my articles "Tabrīz" and "Marāgha" in *EI*.

[6] On the ruins of their capital Sarmāj, south of Bīsūtūn, see O. Mann, *Globus*, 1903, vol. lxxxiii, pp. 327–331. Ḥasanwaih's mosque in Sarmāj was built of hewn stone, Ibn al-Athīr, viii, 281.

dynasties, but the change of rulers could not suddenly check or modify local culture, which in fact the conquerors themselves patronized in order to give more lustre to their reign.

The **Qara-khanid** dynasty which by 999 conquered Samarqand and Bukhārā, lasted till the year 1141. Many of these kings were great builders. Shams al-mulk in 1078 built Rabāṭ al-Malik which is the oldest non-religious building still existing, although in ruins, in Turkestan.[1] To him also were due the rabāṭ of Aq-kutal (on the road Samarqand–Khojand), the palace Shams-ābād in Bukhārā, and the new cathedral mosque in Bukhārā. Aḥmad khan (d. A.D. 1095) was the builder of a magnificent new palace at Jūybār. But the greatest number of constructions are attributed to Arslan khan who restored the citadel of Bukhārā and its walls, built an oratory outside Shams-ābād (in 1119), a superb cathedral mosque (in 1121), which was destroyed by the Mongols and of which a minaret survived till 1920. He further built two palaces of which the one was turned into a madrasa, and restored the town of Paykand. Tamghach-khan Ibrahim was the builder of a magnificent palace in the Gurgīn quarter of Samarqand.[2]

The **Ghaznavids'** domination in Khorasan and Central Persia was short and precarious. Soon, under the pressure of the Seljuks, the Ghaznavids concentrated their activities in southern Afghānistān and Northern India. They gave a considerable incentive to Persian literature and historiography but, as regards architecture, did not leave any vestiges outside the immediate environs of their capital Ghaznī. The two famous towers of Ghaznī are closely akin to the similar constructions in Khorasan but, as usually happened in the Kābul valley, influences from the Indian lowlands had already under Mas'ūd (A.D. 1030–1041) made themselves felt in the style of Ghaznavid decorations.[3] A brief formula to characterize the Ghaznavid art would be that being eastern Persian it developed in the north-to-south direction.

An incomparably more important role in Islamic history belongs to the **Seljuks** who, contrary to the Ghaznavids, operated on the east-to-west line and joined Transoxiana to Mesopotamia. In 1036 they began their triumphal march from Khorasan and already in

[1] Umniakov, "Rabāt-i Malik" (in Russian) in *Dedicatory volume to V. V. Barthold*, Tashkent, 1927. The rabāṭ lies in the neighbourhood of Karmīna.

[2] Narshakhī, pp. 49–50; Barthold, *Turkestan*, p. 319.

[3] A. Godard, *Ghaznī*, Paris, 1925, p. 59.

1055 were masters of Baghdād. The buildings of the Seljuks, their kinsmen, and ministers are scattered in Marv, Rayy, Isfahān, Kirmān, and Baghdād. The rule of the great sultans lasted only some 120 years ; the empire, which shrank as quickly as it had expanded, never finally developed a natural centre. Perhaps Isfahān might have become such,[1] but when after 1118 the authority passed to the 'Irāq branch, Hamadān decidedly outweighed Isfahān. Here stood the college founded by Ay-aba, the atabek of Sultan Tughril II. Here still stands the Gunbad-i 'Alawiyān, most probably the mausoleum of the rich and influential family 'Alawī which flourished in Hamadān under the last Seljuks.[2]

Already during his reign the last great Seljuk Sanjar was made prisoner by the unruly Turkoman tribes. After his death (A.D. 1157) the east was lost to the Seljuks. In 1187 the Kirmān branch was overthrown by the Turkoman rebels and in 1194 the last of the Seljuks of 'Irāq fell in a battle with the Khwārazm-shāh, the new rising power. However, the episode of the **Khwārazmian** domination, owing to its brevity and agitated character, had no importance in the cultural life of Persia.

On the other hand during the decline of the Seljuks the local dynasties of former governors (*atabeks*) had asserted their autonomy, and under their rule the provinces enjoyed some degree of tranquillity and stimulation, indispensable for the development of any craft not purely utilitarian.

The founder of the **Salghurid** dynasty of Fārs, Sunqur ibn Maudūd (1148–1162), built the cathedral mosque of Shīrāz and a rest-house (*rabāṭ*), while his successors' achievement was the embellishment of the mausoleum of the celebrated saint Abu 'Abdillāh ibn Khafīf.[3]

The extant buildings of the Āzarbayjān rulers of the **Ildegizid** family are concentrated in Nakhchivan on the northern bank of the Araxes.[4]

[1] The great Masjid-i jum'a was built by Malik-shāh, see now in detail A. Godard, in *Āthār-é Īrān*, i/2, 1936, pp. 213–282. Niẓām al-mulk, the great minister of the Seljuks, was buried in Isfahān in a madrasa built by himself (Zakariyā Qazwīnī, ii, 276) and which must not be confused with the better known Niẓāmiya completed in Baghdād in 1065. Sultan Bark-yaruq's (d. A.D. 1104) resting-place was in a mausoleum constructed for him in Isfahān by his favourite wife.

[2] The Gunbad was first mentioned by Khanykov (1852). Herzfeld, " Der Gunbad-i 'Alawiyyān " in *A volume . . . presented to E. G. Browne*, Cambridge, 1922, dates it of the reign of Uljāytū (1304–1316). But if my hypothesis is right, the date would be *circa* A.D. 1200–1250. Cf. *Rāḥat al-Ṣudūr*, p. 40 ; *Jahān-gushā*, i, 115.

[3] *Tārīkh-i guzīda*, Gibb Memorial, pp. 505–9 (transl. pp. 120–1).

[4] Khanykoff, " Mémoire sur les inscriptions musulmanes du Caucase," *Jour. As.*, August, 1862, and Sarre, *Denkmäler persischer Baukunst*. Cf. now my article " Nakhičevān " in *EI*.

Sāva, situated half-way between Qazvīn and Qum, seems to have had a series of autonomous rulers whose history is still very little known. To their constructions may belong some of the stucco ornaments which came to light at the London Exhibition of Persian Art.[1]

7.

The Khwārazmians were crushed by the wave of **Mongol** invasion. Contrary to the current view that the Mongol domination was of a purely destructive character—a view that echoes perhaps the resentment of the Muslims against the capture of Baghdād and the cruel execution of the caliph—the Mongols guaranteed to the conquered races the benefits of a stable rule and opened communications with far distant countries, thus encouraging both material and intellectual exchanges, while they directly promoted sciences and arts.

The activities of the Ilkhans were concentrated in their crown province Āzarbayjān. In Hulāgū's capital Marāgha there exist five remarkable tumular towers but, as A. and Y. Godard have shown, none of them belongs to the conqueror's times.[2]

Both Hulāgū and his son Abaqa were buried on the island Shāhī where Hulāgū's treasure was also kept.[3] Already under Abaqa the capital was transferred to Tabrīz [4] and the Ilkhans gave much attention to its suburb Shanb (Shām), quite particularly associated with the name of Ghazan. He built here a mausoleum in which he was buried in state in 703/1304. This gorgeous building was surrounded by a mosque, two madrasas, a house for the sayyids (*dār al-siyāda*), a hospital, a library, an office for the archives, a tank, a bath, etc. The ministers and the nobles worked on the embellishment of Tabrīz itself. The famous vazir and historian Rashīd al-dīn's creation was the new quarter of Rab'-i Rashīdī with numerous edifices.

Ghazan's successor Uljāytū (1304–1316) [5] is particularly known by his attempt to create a new capital in Sulṭāniya, which was neither geographically nor historically suited for such a high destiny. The

[1] To atabek Shīrgīr (towards A.D. 1107–1127) were due some constructions near Sāva.

[2] *Āthār-é Īrān*, i/2, 1936, pp. 125–156. Three of them are of the sixth/twelfth century. The oldest of them bears the date of 542/1148 and the name of the builder Qawwām of Āzarbayjān 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Maḥmūd b. Sa'd ; cf. *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*, p. 298.

[3] *Nuzhat al-qulūb*, 241. The treasury was plundered before Ghazan's times ; cf. D'Ohsson, *Histoire des Mongols*, iv, 340.

[4] See my article " Tabrīz " in *EI.*

[5] The original pronunciation of his name is *Öljeytü.*

memento of this royal fancy is Uljāitū's mausoleum in Sulṭāniya, one of the most celebrated buildings in the whole of Persia. The last of the Mongol dynasty Abū Sa'īd (1316–1335) was also buried in Sulṭāniya but the fact that Uljāitū's own vazir 'Alī-shah built his famous mosque [1] in Tabrīz shows that the old city did not divest itself of its primacy even when the glory of its ephemeral rival [2] stood at its highest. Uljāytū was a great builder and the remarkable mosque in Varāmīn (south-east of Rayy) [3] dated 1322 (and rebuilt in 1412) was erected under his auspices. In his time too 'Aḍid b. 'Alī al-Māstarī, commissioned by the Sāḥib Dīvān Sa'd al-dīn, reconstructed the great cathedral mosque of Isfahān.[4]

Among the provincial buildings of the Mongol epoch are the funerary tower of Rādkān in Khorasan,[5] the tower of Mīrī Khātūn, daughter of Arghun-aqa,[6] built in the beginning of the fourteenth century, and a series of most beautiful mausoleums of Mongol amirs at Akhlāt on the northern shore of the lake of Van.[7] Under the dynasty of the **Qutlugh-khans** (A.D. 1220–1303) Kirmān formed a considerable cultural centre.[8] Here the founder of the dynasty built a madrasa outside the city while another madrasa, known under the name of Green Dome, was constructed within the walls in 1242. The energetic Tarkān khātūn who ousted her brother from the throne erected in Kirmān a magnificent cathedral mosque in 1260. In **Luristān,** too, the atabek Nuṣrat al-dīn Aḥmad (A.D. 1295–1329), a

[1] 'Alī-shāh's ambition was to eclipse the Sasanian palace (*Tāq-i Kisrā*) at Ctesiphon. We possess a detailed description of the mosque in an Egyptian relation preserved in al-'Aynī's *'Iqd al-Jimān*, transl. by Baron Tiesenhausen, *Zapiski Vost. Otd.*, i, 1886, pp. 114–18.

[2] See my article " Sulṭāniya " in *EI.* Several buildings in Sulṭāniya belong to the later Ṣafavid and Qājār times.

[3] The mosque has been studied in detail by V. Morozov. See my article in *Apollo*, London, March, 1931 and " Warāmīn " in *EI.*

[4] van Berchem, in *Mélanges H. Derenbourg*, Paris, 1909, pp. 367–378, and *Āthār-é Īrān*, i/2, p. 234.

[5] This Rādkān, situated north-east of Qūchān is not to be confused with the Rādkān situated on Nikā, south-west of Astarābād, v.s. It belonged to the special fief of the famous Mongol administrator Arghun-aqa, *v.i.*, p. 634, note 4.

[6] See van Berchem in "Materialen z. ältesten Geschichte Armeniens", *Abhand. Ges. Wiss. Göttingen*, N.F., ix, pp. 158–9 ; of the date one reads only seven hundred (7 ? ?).

[7] These round towers, dated 1273, 1279, 1281, strangely recall similar buildings in Persia, but here they show an influence of the Armenian style. They were first discovered by Lynch, *Armenia*, ii, 280–297. For more details see Bachmann, *Kirchen und Moscheen in Armenien und Kurdistan*, Leipzig, 1913, pl. 55–8.

[8] See my article " Ḳutlugh-khan " in *EI.*

contemporary of Ghazān and Uljāytū, was a great builder. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa ascribes to him no less than 160 madrasas.[1]

After Abū-Sa'īd, who died childless, eight Mongol khans, one after the other, struggled for the supremacy in Āzarbayjān (1336–1344). Then two families of former Mongol generals (the Chobanids and the Jalāyirs) rose to prominence and finally the Jalāyirs (from 759/1358) ruled over an unusual combination of territories comprising Baghdād and Tabrīz and extending towards the eastern part of Transcaucasia. The **Jalāyirs** were patrons of the arts [2] and notwithstanding the very agitated character of their rule were regarded as the lawful rulers of Āzarbayjān. The most imposing brick building (*ark*) which towers over Tabrīz must be Shah Uwais's *Daulat-khāna*, which Clavijo calls " Tolbatgana ".[3]

The situation in Eastern Persia after the death of Abū-Sa'īd (1336) was no less entangled. A scion of the Mongol khans, Tughā Tīmūr, was reigning in Astarābād, while Khorasan came under the sway of the Shī'ite Sarbadārs who were rather a series of rulers than a dynasty. Some parts of Khorasan were occupied by the **Karts** of Herat. On the lands between Tūs and Marv a local family of Mongol origin [4] enjoyed some sort of independence.

In the south, after a struggle between the two families of Mongol governors, the Injūyids and **Muẓaffarids**, the latter triumphed and ruled in Fārs, Kirman, Persian 'Irāq, and Khūzistān (1353–1393). Even against Tabrīz, the Muẓaffarids twice led expeditions. The court of Shīrāz in those days was frequented by such poets as Ḥāfiz, but one knows little of the architectural activity of this dynasty. Sharaf al-din Muẓaffar was buried in his own madrasa in Maybūd near Yazd (in 713/1314). Mubāriz al-din built a mosque outside the Zarand gate of the old city of Kirmān,[5] a college called *Dār al-siyāda*, etc. Shāh Shujā' is said to have spent 200,000 dinars on his own tomb and a rest-house, both in Mekka. Masjid-i Pā-minār, still

[1] See my article " Lur-i Buzurg " in *EI.*

[2] See the Jalāyir Sulṭān Aḥmad's *Dīvān* with very curious illustrations published by Dr. Martin, *Miniatures from the Period of Tīmūr*, Vienna, 1926.

[3] The rare " Muntakhab al-tawārīkh ", *Bib. Nat.*, sup. pers., 1651, fol. 327 v., definitely says that Shāh Uwais built a *Daulat-khāna*. See my article " Tabrīz " in *EI.*

[4] The Jān-Qurbānī (probably in Mongol **Dzun-ghurban*) were the descendants of the Mongol governor Arghūn-Aqa (of Oyrat origin), see *Jahān-gushā*, ii, 242–251, cf. my article " Ṭūs " in *EI.*

[5] According to the *Tārīkh-i guzīda*, transl. pp. 114, 184, the mosque was built in 752/1351, but Sir P. Sykes, *Ten Thousand Miles in Persia*, p. 194, says that the inscription of Mubāriz al-dīn's cathedral mosque gives 730/1329.

existing in Kirmān, was founded by Sultan 'Imād al-dīn about 793/1390.

8.

Tīmūr's invasion forcibly united the Iranian lands and, in spite of all the massacres and destruction which accompanied it, led to the formation of cultural centres round the residences of the prince-governors. Tīmūr himself did not care for any town but his own capital Samarqand whither the booty and the artisans from the conquered regions were directed.

Of Tīmūr's sons, Mīrān-shāh put at the head of an immense fief ("Hulāgū's fief") with the capital at Tabrīz was not insensible to the charm of arts, at least of music, but even the official historians say that a fall from horseback affected his reason to such a point that he committed acts of vandalism. He is said to have destroyed several buildings and caused the bones of the famous Rashīd al-dīn to be thrown out of his tomb at Rab'-i Rashīdī.

In Shīrāz the successive rule of the princes Iskandar and Ibrāhīm offered better prospects to men of science and art.

But one of the highest epochs of Persian art was reached under those highly cultivated **Timurids** who from Herat ruled over the rapidly waning realm of Eastern Persia. From the still mighty sovereign Shāh-Rukh (1404–1447), who led expeditions to South Persia and even to Armenia and Transcaucasia, down to Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bayqarā (1473–1506), a merely local ruler, Herat remained for a century the great centre of Persian artistic and literary life.[1]

With Herat too are associated the splendours of Persian miniature painting, both in its early virile period connected with the name of the patron prince Baysunqur (d. A.D. 1433), and in its later still more brilliant though perhaps less vigorous phase, the central figure of which is the great Bihzād.

9.

The splendours of Herat in the east did not, however, exhaust the artistic activities of the fifteenth century. In the west the chief

[1] On the great number of poets, writers and historians who in the fifteenth century lived in Herat see E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, iii. See also the material collected by L. Bouvat in his "Essai sur la civilisation timouride", *JA.*, April, 1926, pp. 193–299. On the Timurid monuments see Khanikoff in *JA.*, 1860, xv, pp. 537–543, and recently R. Byron, *The road to Oxiana*, 1937, Index under "Herat".

opponents of the Timurids were the **Turcoman** dynasties of the Black Sheep and the White Sheep (in Turkish respectively Qara-Qoyunlu and Aq-Qoyunlu).

The first had a moment of glory under Jahān-Shāh who extended his raids even to Herat, and to whom the most gorgeous monument of Tabrīz, the Blue Mosque (*Gök-Masjid*), is due.[1] Jahān-shāh was a poet under the *nom de plume* Ḥaqīqī, and a copy of his Turkish and Persian poems is still extant.

When the Aq-Qoyunlu overthrew their rivals of the Black Sheep, they too concentrated their efforts on Tabrīz. There Uzun Ḥasan built the madrasa Naṣriya where he was buried, a mosque north of the maidān of Ṣāhib-ābād mentioned by Evliyā Chelebi,[2] and probably, the palace which Giosafā Barbaro calls "Aptisti" (*Haft-dast*).

Under Sulṭān Ya'qūb, the enlightened successor of Uzun Hasan, the court was rich in literary talents. An album of miniatures arranged for this prince is now kept at the Vieux Sérail Museum at Stambul.[3] Among his buildings was the splendid palace of *Hasht-Bihisht*,[4] with a harem "so large that a thousand women might conveniently live there in different rooms", a mosque, a public place, and a hospital.

10.

The political and cultural centre of Persia moved several times under the great **Ṣafavid** dynasty. The original home of the family, where its ancestors had resided probably since the Seljuk times, was Ardabīl in the north-eastern corner of Āzarbayjān. This was the ancient capital of the province, where the Sasanian governor (*marzpān*) was living at the time of the Arab invasion. Later, especially after the Mongol domination in the thirteenth century, the first place in Āzarbayjān passed to Tabrīz, but Ardabīl lived on, as a sort of autonomous theocratic state, in the odour of sanctity of its shaykhs, the ancestors of Shāh Ismā'īl I. Ardabīl and its environs are a unique

[1] According to W. Hinz, the date of the mosque is 25th October, 1465, and its architect's name is Aḥmad b. Muḥammad, *ZDMG*, 1937, 91, pp. 59 and 422.

[2] *'Ālam-ārā*, p. 217; Evliyā Chelebi, *Seyāḥat-nāma*, ii, pp. 245–278. Cf. Hinz, loc. cit.

[3] Sakisian, *Miniature persane*, Paris, 1929, pp. 34–7. The album (No. 37084) contains specimens of calligraphy, etc., by Sultān 'Alī, Shaykh Muḥammad, 'Abd ar-Rahmān, etc., who call themselves *Ya'qubī*.

[4] *The Anonymous Italian Traveller*, Hakluyt Society, 1873, p. 173, calls it "Astibisti" and says that on its ceiling were represented all the great Persian battles, embassies, etc.

example of a museum-city full of saintly memories. The Ṣafavid monarchs never resided in Ardabīl but retained pious recollections of the home of their fathers. Sarre [1] thinks that the Ardabīl mosque was erected in the second half of the thirteenth century, the famous tomb of Shaykh Ṣafī al-dīn, in the middle of the fourteenth century, and the rest of the buildings composing the sanctuary, in the fifteenth to sixteenth centuries.[2] Ardabīl has never been known as a centre producing artists, but only as a place for keeping the treasures.

No sooner had Shāh Ismā'īl expelled the Aq-Qoyunlu (1502) than he established his headquarters in Tabrīz. The days of Herat, the rival centre, were numbered. In 1507 the founder of the new Central Asian dynasty, the Uzbek Muḥammad Shibani, took Herat and abducted the numerous artists whom he found there. His triumph, however, was merely transitory, for he was defeated and killed by Shah Ismā'īl in 1510. This time the artists of the former Herat school, including the great Bihzād, were transplanted to Tabrīz [3] which now seemed destined for a great artistic career.

In 920/1514 Shāh Ismā'īl was utterly defeated in the battle of Chaldiran (north-west of Khoy) by the Ottoman Sultan Selim who for a short time occupied Tabrīz and led away the craftsmen to Constantinople.[4] A long series of Turco-Persian wars began and Shāh Ismā'īl's successor Tahmāsp (1524–1576) had to remove the capital farther back to Qazvīn, but even at the beginning of Shāh 'Abbās I's reign this city could not boast of any particular beauty.[5] The seat of the government was at the *daulat-khāna*, probably a block of public buildings [6] to which belonged the often named pavilion Eyvān-i Chihil-Sutūn (" the portico of Forty Columns "), evidently the prototype of its later namesake in Isfahān. Public rejoicings were held

[1] *Denkmäler persischer Baukunst*, Textband.

[2] Even under the Qājārs the sanctuary continued to be repaired and embellished as shown by an inscription of 1309/1891.

[3] Bihzād (d. in 942/1536) was buried in a Tabrīz cemetery, according to the preface of the album arranged for Bahrām mīrzā, son of Shāh Ismā'īl (now in Stambul).

[4] Cf. also Angiolello, ed. Hakluyt Society, p. 121 : " The Turk came to Tauris and immediately seeking out 700 families of skilled workmen sent them to Constantinople."

[5] *Relation d'un voyage de Perse faict es années 1598–9 par un gentil-homme à la suite du Seigneur Scierley* (= Shirley), Paris, 1651 : " (Qazvīn) est un peu moins grande que Londres en Angleterre et aussi longue, mais fort mal bastie de terre foulée . . . sans que la ville ait murailles ni rivière hors un petit ruisseau qui coule par un quartier d'icelle." Tectander von der Jabel (1602), " Iter persicum," ed. Schefer, 1877, p. 46, compares Qazvīn with Breslau.

[6] Built under Shāh Tahmāsp, *'Ālam-ārā*, p. 268.

at the *maydān-i asp* ("race-course") situated near the garden of Sa'ādat-ābād.[1]

Qazvīn was only a temporary abode of the Shahs pending the final settlement with Turkey.[2] The weak Shāh Muḥammad Khudābanda twice made an attempt to return to Tabrīz but in 1585 that city was more strongly occupied by the Ottomans and not definitely recovered by Shāh 'Abbās till 1603.

As Shāh Tahmāsp was a great amateur and patron of the Art of the Book, it may be assumed that many of the characteristic miniatures of the glorious "early Ṣafavid" epoch were produced under his direct supervision in Qazvīn. Yet, in spite of its political vicissitudes, Tabrīz continued to be the greatest city of the realm [3] and, as such, presented specially favourable conditions for arts and industries. In this respect we possess at least one important indication: the celebrated manuscript of Niẓāmī's *Khamsa* (British Museum, Or. 2265), the preparation of which took four years (1539–1543), was executed for Shāh Tahmāsp in Tabrīz.

Sultan Murād III's death in 1595 was a signal of a better outlook for Persia in the region occupied by the Ottomans, but the other terrible enemy was menacing Persia from the east, the Uzbeks. Here, too, liberation was near, but, for the moment, all Shāh 'Abbās's energy could not stem the incursions of the raiders who penetrated through Khorasan as far as Yazd (1596), Kāshān, and Khwār (1597). These political circumstances may have influenced Shāh 'Abbās's momentous decision to remove the capital farther south to Isfahān. It must be borne in mind that four cities in Persia at that time enjoyed the title of *dār as-salṭāna* ("residential city"): Herat, Tabrīz, Isfahān, and Qazvīn, but the first two were occupied by the enemy, and only Qazvīn was called *maqarr as-salṭana* ("seat of the government, capital"). This last term was now transferred to Isfahān.

11.

Shāh 'Abbās, king since 1587, made his first sojourn in Isfahān in 1591 and returned there in 1593 and 1597. The ceremony of *naurūz*

[1] Cf. *'Ālam-ārā*, pp. 297, 341, 346 (I take *Maydān-i asp* as identical with *Maydān-i Sa'ādat-ābād*).

[2] Teixeira, Franch transl., p. 379, says that Qazvīn became the residence of the kings of Persia, "after the loss of Tabrīz". Tabrīz was successively occupied by the Turks in 1514, 1534, 1548, 1585–1603, 1610, 1618, 1635 (town entirely ransacked), 1724, 1725, 1727–9, 1731–6.

[3] According to the *'Ālam-ārā*, p. 224, it had 100,000 inhabitants.

(" New Year ") of 1006/1598 was held at Qazvīn, where extraordinary cold prevailed that year, and this may have quickened a resolution which had been ripening for some time.[1] The *naurūz* of 1007/1599 was celebrated in the new capital.[2]

The great city possessed at that time numerous vestiges of the past, but Shāh 'Abbās impressed on it his own indelible seal by decreeing a radical replanning of its streets, squares, and markets.[3] The shāh fixed his residence at the government offices (*daulat-khāna*) in the garden Naqsh-i Jahān. By the spring new buildings were ready there. From the gate of Daulat, near the harem of Naqsh-i Jahān, an avenue was opened down to the river, with four gardens [4] and many beautiful buildings constructed along it. This avenue of Chār-bāgh was continued on the southern side of the river and plots distributed among the amirs and nobles with the injunction to erect there buildings embellished with gold and lapis lazuli. At the end of the avenue a vast garden with nine terraces (*nuh tabaqa ?*) was planted and called 'Abbās-ābād. The two banks of the river were spanned by a bridge of forty arches. The total length of the avenue was 1 farsakh (4 miles). On both sides of it were planted cypresses, plane-trees, firs, and *'ar'ar*-trees (*Pinus gherardiana*). On both sides, too, and in the middle of the avenue rills were running. There was a large pond in front of each of the buildings of the Chār-bāgh. To the west of the avenue the town of 'Abbās-ābād was built for the immigrants from Āzarbayjān.[5]

The Isfahān period of the history of Persia (approximately A.D. 1600–1722) is marked by wonderful achievements in all branches of art, but most of all perhaps in architecture. The great square (*maydān*) with its system of mosques, palaces, and avenues was a bold attempt at rebuilding an old Asiatic town on a deliberate plan.[6] New luxurious edifices required all sorts of artistically prepared or fabricated materials and embellishments : tiles, carved wood, painted

[1] *'Ālam-ārā*, pp. 287, 309, 324, 361.

[2] Ibid., p. 374.

[3] An excellent and complete survey of the monuments of Isfahān, due to the pen of A. Godard, has just appeared in *Āthār-é Īrān*, ii/1, 1937, pp. 1–176.

[4] Or : four gardens on each side.

[5] *'Ālam-ārā*, p. 373, where the author (writing in 1616, when Isfahān was completely rebuilt) gives 1005/1597 as the year in which the Chār-bāgh was planned.

[6] Many times described (Chardin, Tavernier), cf. Diez, " Isfahān," in *Zeitschr. f. bildende Kunst*, xxvi, 1915, pp. 90–104, 113–128 [but above all, A. Godard's latest work, *v.s.*].

panels, decorative pottery, wrought metals. Specialists were therefore welcome from all parts.

A great number of foreigners, both European and Asiatic, living in Isfahān, contributed to a contact between Persian and foreign art. To quote only Tavernier,[1] Shāh 'Abbās II made a Dutchman paint a drinking-party of Englishmen and Dutchmen on the walls of his audience hall (*tālār*); the merchants of Julfā presented to him two oil paintings brought from Venice and Leghorn; the two Dutch painters Angel (1616–1683) and Lokar (?) whom the Dutch Company sent to Persia and who became the Shāh's teachers, made of him an able draughtsman. We even know purely Persian miniatures directly influenced by Dutch and Italian art. Muḥammad Zamān (second half of the seventeenth century), who studied in Italy, is a curious and attractive figure. The way in which he tried to reform Persian painting is a memorable piece of pioneer work, not devoid of importance even for present-day Persian artists. The carpets and textiles continued to be produced at the usual places [2] but the Isfahān market stimulated their production and controlled the excellence of their designs.

No one would attribute the splendours of the Isfahān period exclusively or chiefly to its geographical situation, but the choice for the capital of an ancient town, advantageously situated in the centre of the country, and in the purely Iranian part of it, certainly gave opportunities to the local craftsmen and encouraged commerce not only with this or that outlying part of Persia, but harmoniously with all the provinces, so that each could contribute to the glory of the capital towards which the roads converged.

The accession of the Ṣafavids to power coincided with the discovery of the sea route round the Cape of Good Hope. While the western frontier was practically closed for Persia, owing to the long struggles with Turkey, the establishment of the Portuguese in Hormuz and other parts of the Persian Gulf opened for Persia a new outlet in the south. So the transfer of the capital to Isfahān was in fact a move towards a closer touch with Europe.

The activities of the Ṣafavids, however, were by no means confined to the capital. It is enough to mention here the embellishments of the

[1] *Voyages*, book iv, chapters vii and xviii.

[2] Among the gifts which Shāh 'Abbās in 1598 presented to the sanctuary of Mashhad figure precious lamps and candlesticks, various vessels and "sumptuous carpets (*qālīhā-yi bā-takalluf*) of Kirmān and Jūshaqān", *'Ālam-ārā*, p. 398.

Ardabīl sanctuary, the building of an imposing mosque in Herat [1] by Shāh 'Abbās I, the creation of two beautiful residences in Māzandarān, Faraḥābād (1612) and Ashraf (1613), with their richly decorated palaces and parks, and finally of the innumerable resting-houses (*karvān-sarāy*) at nearly all the principal passes.

12.

The **Afghan** invasion was a short, but painful experience. Western provinces were sacrificed to the Turks, the Caspian shore to the Russians, while ruins accumulated both in Isfahān and on the route of the retreating hordes as they were driven out by **Nādir.**

This new star of the Persian firmament had a meteoric and rather erratic career. Isfahān may have remained the capital, for, at the outset, Nādir pretended to be the restorer of the Safavīd might, modestly calling himself Tahmāsp-quli, i.e. " Shāh Tahmāsp II's slave." But the ultra-shī'ite Isfahān was uncongenial to a man whose dream was the reunion of the shī'a and the sunna and it is significant that Nādir's coronation took place in a remote camp, on the Mūghān steppe (north of Ardabīl). If the new sovereign, ever warring, ever on the move, had any predilection, it lay rather with his native Khorasan.[2] To keep the immense spoils brought from India, Nādir fortified that extraordinary natural fastness on the northern frontier of Khorasan which received the name of Kalāt-i Nādirī.[3] The short-lived dynasty of Nādir very rapidly lost most of Persia, and only in Khorasan and its capital Mashhad the Nādirids and the representatives of a lateral line of the Ṣafavids maintained themselves till the accession of the Qājārs. Nādir beautified the buildings of the shrine of Imām Rizā and covered some of them all over with " gold bricks ". He also built in Mashhad a lofty mausoleum for himself.[4]

Meanwhile, the whole of southern, western, and northern Persia passed under the ægis of the capable Kurdish chief Kerīm khan **Zand** who installed his headquarters in Shīrāz in the province of Fārs, that cradle of the Achæmenids and Sāsānians and one of the mainstays of the Būyids. But while these other dynasties largely expanded

[1] 'Abbās I in his early childhood was the governor of Khorasan of which the capital was Herat. After a war with his father, 'Abbās was first proclaimed Sulṭān of Khorasan in 995/1587.

[2] He belonged to the Afshar tribe established on the northern outskirts of Khorasan at Abīvard (ancient Apovarktikēnē). See my article " Bāvard " in *EI* (Supplement).

[3] Its original Persian name was probably *Kalāg dizh*, cf. *Bundahishn*, vii, 35.

[4] 'Alī Ḥazīn, *Tārīkh-i aḥwāl*, London, 1831, p. 252. On Nādir's buildings cf. my *Esquisse d'une histoire de Nadir-chah*, Paris, 1934, p. 39.

from Fārs, the Zands, whose only great representative contented himself with the title "Regent" (*vakīl*), never sufficiently reduced the north where the Nādirids continued to rule in Khorasan and the Qājars were lying in wait for a better opportunity. Shīrāz was considerably embellished by Karīm khan, who built a mosque and a bazaar, and of whom we possess several portraits by his court artists.[1]

13.

After the supremacy which the south enjoyed between 1750 and 1794, the **Qājārs**, whose Turkish tribe was occupying the steppe in the south-east corner of the Caspian near Astarābād, moved the centre of the reunited kingdom to the north. The new capital Tehrān had been in olden times an insignificant village in the neighbourhood of Rayy,[2] and only under the Ṣafavids rose to some importance. The situation of Tehrān was appreciated by Karīm khan, who built there a series of government buildings. The Qājārs wanted first of all to be in the proximity of their hereditary fief and tribe in Astarābād. On the other hand, since the Afghan interregnum permitted Turkey and Russia to concert their action for the occupation respectively of the north-western and Caspian provinces, the new dynasty was anxious to keep a close watch on this new menace. Armenia in the west, and Herat in the east, over which the Qājārs tried to establish their dominion lay also in the north. Tehrān was half-way between Āzarbayjān and Khorasan, and the importance of the region was shown by the glorious past of the great city of Rayy whose tradition Tehrān was intended to continue.

The achievements of the Tehrān period in the history of Persia must not be underestimated. It is a time of gradual unification and modernization of the country. Tehrān, now the most populous town of Persia [3] has become the undisputed pivot of the intellectual life of Persia. Here are the government offices and the schools, the chief newspapers, and the numerous foreign colonies. In the book market only Tabrīz cuts some figure by the side of Tehrān.

[1] Under Aqa Muḥammad Qājār the paintings, mirrors, and marble columns of Karīm khan's palace were transported to the new palace in Tehrān.

[2] The first undoubted mention of it in the existing sources is in the *Fārs-nāma* written in A.D. 1160; see my article "Teheran" in *EI.*

[3] Before the world war Tabrīz with its presumed 250,000 inhabitants was considered to have the largest population. Now Tehrān is said to possess a population of 350,000, and with its country-side even 450,000 to 500,000.

It cannot be denied, however, that under the Qājār regime the arts did not reach such remarkable standards as under the Mongols or the Ṣafavids. Any more important architectural achievements in the capital date only from the later part of the reign of Nāṣir al-dīn Shāh, or more precisely, since the reconstruction and aggrandizement of the city about 1870. The best edifice, "the Sipahsālār's Mosque," was begun in 1878 and finished in 1890. A prominent feature of the capital are numerous suburban villas of the princes and other magnates in a special elegant style carrying on the tradition of the Ṣafavid buildings.[1]

The Qājārs built several government buildings in the provinces, but such structures have very rarely, e.g. in Kermanshah, had any but practical aims. The shāhs kept up the sanctuaries in Mashhad, Qum, Ardabīl, and Mesopotamia, but evinced little interest in ordinary antiquity. In general Persians prefer to build anew rather than to keep up the existing monuments.

The early Qājār miniature is still insufficiently known in Europe, though these representations of slightly europeanized gentlemen in tall Persian lambskin hats, of eunuchs and fair inhabitants of the harem, are much more interesting than the more frequent large oil portraits of the shāhs (especially of the long-bearded and wasp-waisted Fatḥ 'Alī Shāh), or of traditional dancers in unnatural attitudes. The Qājār miniatures very rarely illustrate books. They are mostly painted on loose sheets and especially on lacquer pen-boxes, mirror-backs, etc. They are often quite artistic, and precious too for the study of vestimentary changes and successive modes in which the Qājār capital played the role of *arbiter elegantiarum*.

Minor arts were not unknown in Tehrān, but the best carpets were produced at the usual places of manufacture; for wood-carvings and metal-work one had to look to the region of Isfahān; the appliqué panels came from Rasht, some elegant thin glassware from Qum and Qāshān, etc. Great havoc has been wrought amongst Persian textiles by the growing importation of silks, velvets, and prints from abroad.

The attempts of the Qājārs to immortalize their likenesses on the rocks in the Achæmenid and Sasanian way are very curious. Among such are Prince Muḥammad 'Ali's group at Tāq-i Bustān,[2] Fatḥ

[1] In Tehrān itself must be mentioned the building called Shams al-'imāra within the precincts of the Shāh's palace; cf. d'Allemagne, *Du Khorasan au pays de Backhtiaris* (*sic !*), Paris, 1911.

[2] Local name: *Tāq-i Vastām*.

'Alī Shāh's hunting scene at Rayy, Nāṣir al-dīn Shāh's portrait in state on the roads to Māzandarān and Chālūs and at Chashma-yi 'Ali (near Rayy).[1]

14.

It would be too early to prophesy about the **Pahlavi** dynasty, the founder of which has so far remained faithful to the Qājār capital. But great improvements in mechanical transport, railways, and air-lines are changing the aspect of Persia. The still growing impulse from the capital is towards a general modernization. Tehrān is being actively rebuilt, Persian youths acquire abroad occidental methods and ways of expression. It is impossible to expect the new generation to think and to create in the ways of the old naïve tradition. The synthesis of the old and new, so far asunder, is not an easy task. One may foresee that the influence of occidental standards will become paramount before long, unless a special training at the schools of art and industries helps to preserve the national tradition by giving the support of reasoned theories to the inborn instinct.

P.S.—Our survey stops on the threshold of the Pahlavi reign. Enormous changes have taken place in Irān during the last twelve years. On the occasion of the celebration of Firdausi's millenary in 1934 I had myself the great privilege of witnessing the political and cultural risorgimento of the ancient kingdom. Great progress has been achieved in the study, as well as in the teaching, of Persian national arts and crafts. However, the synthesis of the tradition and of the new artistic ideas and methods flowing in from the west still remains a problem, similar to that which Iranian artists solved in the thirteenth century when Far Eastern influences were so harmoniously blended with the legacy of the local pictorial art!

III. The East and West in Persian Culture

Another basic question of the history of Persian art, and even of the whole cultural life of Persia, is the respective rôles of the western and eastern parts of Iran. The subject dominates the fortunes of those political centres round which artistic activity gravitated at different epochs.

[1] To say nothing of a purely European monument of Nāṣir al-dīn which stood in Bāgh-i shāh (Tehrān).

1.

The Central desert, like an unnavigable internal sea, is the great natural feature of Persia. The roads on its southern skirts are round-about tracks linking up regions of secondary importance. It is true that Fārs is the cradle of the Persian state and one of the vital parts of the kingdom,[1] but, even at the periods of its ascendancy, Fārs had no particular interest in the south-eastern provinces, such as Kirmān, Balūchistān, Sīstān, which hardly ever have risen above their local interests.[2] Fārs naturally gravitated towards the west, as the examples of the Achæmenids, Sāsānians, and Būyids clearly show.

Much more important was the great "Khorasan road" running along the fertile belt of land that stretches between the northern fringe of the desert and the southern foot-hills of the Elburs range. But even this historical artery is but a slender thread drawn between Mesopotamia and Central Asia. The region of Tehran (ancient Rhages, Rayy), the most advanced part of North-Western Persia, is separated by some 550 miles from Nīshāpūr, the centre of the westernmost "quarter" of Khorasan. Yet Khorasan possessed three other "quarters": Herat, Balkh, and Marv, and beyond them stretched Transoxiana (Bukhārā, Samarqand) which down to the end of the rule of the Sāmānids (A.D. 999) still preserved its Iranian character.[3]

The direct historical influences which the West and East of Persia had undergone were very dissimilar, and the aboriginal populations which the Iranians on their arrival (towards the tenth century B.C.) subdued and with whom they mixed were equally distinct.

In the west we know the Elamites, Kassites, numerous Zagros tribes, Mannæans in the region of the lake of Urmiya and different peoples round the Caspian Sea (Kaspians, Kadusians, etc.).

The Western marches were strongly influenced by the Mesopotamian civilization (Sumerian, Babylonian, Assyrian). Farther north the kingdom of Urarṭu (tenth–seventh century B.C.) with its centre in Van expanded towards Āzarbayjān and Transcaucasia.

The farthest point in the East which the Assyrians knew was the mountain Bikni (probably Damāvand) but in fact the Mesopotamian

[1] V.s., p. 624.

[2] The only exception is the rise from Sīstān of the Ṣaffārid dynasty (867–903), which, during its short existence, tried to unite Eastern and Southern Persia along the road south of the Central desert.

[3] The small Soviet republic of Tājīkistān unites now the remnants of the different Iranian elements to the north of the Oxus.

conquerors hardly ever penetrated farther than the belt of the Zagros valleys. Eastern Iran never experienced their direct action.

We know practically nothing of the earliest populations of Eastern Iran but the Iranian nomads who came to occupy the Central Asian steppes greatly differed from the sedentary Persians and the existence of the steppe with its nomads was a factor unknown in the West. In the Avesta, and still more in the Iranian epics, finally moulded by Firdausi, the chief trait is the struggle between the settled population and the nomads.[1] So the creation of the *Shāhnāma* is due to the East, and it is now generally admitted that the great national hero Rustam belongs to the particular lore of the Saka, who towards 131 B.C. occupied the region to which they gave their name Sakastān (now Sīstān).

Under the Achæmenids almost the whole of Iran was united and the inhabitants of the remote satrapies followed the kings on their campaigns. That the truly imperial art of the Achæmenids was very eclectic has long been known, and recently an inscription found at Susa has shed new light on the rôle of the far-distant provinces in the supply of building-materials used by the Achæmenid architects. It is characteristic, though, that the contribution of the Eastern satrapies was relatively insignificant.

Alexander's conquest (331–23 B.C.) may have been detrimental to the national tradition, but by carrying their high culture far into the heart of Asia the Greeks contributed to a new union of the west and east of Iran, on the basis of the new ideas and tastes. Although Greek culture, and even the Greek language, keep their prestige under the Arsacids (250 B.C.–A.D. 224), the Greek colonies and rulers in Central Asia (Bactriana, etc.) at an early date lose the direct contact with their western brethren and follow their independent line of evolution. Under the pressure of new peoples arriving from the east they are thrust southwards towards India and exercise their hellenizing influence on the peoples south of the Hindukush, but in their turn become Buddhists and open the door to the penetration into Eastern Iran of Indian influences. While the Arsacids were active in the West, Eastern Iran was submerged by the newcomers hailing from the lands of Chinese culture.

Bukhārā,[2] Tirmidh, Balkh, Bāmiyān, Kābul, and even Sīstān have remains of Buddhist origin and the Buddhist writings in Iranian

[1] The early "Turanians" are not to be confused with the Turks, as has been done by the authors of later times. See above, p. 625.

[2] Its name means: Buddhist *vihāra*.

languages found in Chinese Turkestan reflect the existence of a Buddhist Eastern Iran, rather provincial but having a personality of its own.

Indirectly this isolation favoured a new penetration of western influences. While the growing power of the Zoroastrian clergy enforced the state religion in the Sasanian empire, the Christians and Manichæans successfully carried on their propaganda in the more indifferent atmosphere of Eastern Iran.

2.

Islam is the great roller levelling the Near and Middle East, but even in Islamic times, the characteristic opposition between East and West continues. The state of our knowledge is still insufficient for an adequate presentation of the whole problem but, failing such a survey, it may be helpful to sum up the arguments of an important and illuminating discussion on the respective rôles of the East and West in Iranian culture, which took place among such scholars as the late M. Hartmann. J. Strzygowski, Diez, Herzfeld, and the late V. Barthold.[1]

The originator of the discussion was Martin Hartmann, a scholar of inquiring mind, who, in sometimes unexpected connections, raised curious and important problems.[2] Already in 1905,[3] reviewing F. Sarre's work on some clay-figured vessels from Mesopotamia [4] Hartmann vindicated the claim of Central Asia to be the focus from which the culture of the Islamic Middle Ages radiated.

Sarre retorted in a decisive way [5]: "In Mesopotamia and Iran, not in Turan . . . have we recognized the ground (Kulturboden) on which the Sasanian and Perso-Islamic art arose and further developed." Very little is known of the supposed high standards of Central Asiatic production. The Budhha-statues are neither artistic nor original. If the Mongolian type is represented by Persian painters, the Mongol invasions of the thirteenth century account for it. In a

[1] *Grosso modo* we are dependent on the indications contained in Barthold's article "Vostochno-Iranskiy vopros" ("The Eastern Iranian question"), in *Izvestiya materialnoy Kulturï*, ii, 1922, pp. 361–384, which, on account of the language, has remained almost unknown in Western Europe, in spite of its great importance.

[2] M. Hartmann's name must be gratefully remembered by the scholars using his collection of books, now a part of our School Library. The present writer owes a special homage to M. Hartmann's memory for the encouragements received at the dawn of his Oriental studies (1904–1914).

[3] *OLZ*, 1905, July, pp. 277–283.

[4] "Islamische Tongefässe aus Mesopotamien" in *Jahrb. d. K. Preuss. Kunstsammlungen*, xxvi, II Heft, 1905.

[5] *OLZ*, 1905, December, p. 541.

time when the Mongols were a ruling class "the ideal of beauty" became Mongolian, but the execution and the art remained Irano-Mesopotamian in the hands of the subject classes. The latter remained faithful to their artistic feelings, even though outwardly they made concessions to the taste of the ruling caste. We know that the Persians who accompanied the Seljuks to Asia Minor created there the wonders of Persian architecture,[1] we know that Timur brought Persian architects from Isfahān in order to transform Bukhārā and Samarqand into georgous residences[2]; we know that under his successors Persian architecture and Persian miniature painting were transplanted to India, where they flourished independently.

In an article on a very abstruse subject,[3] M. Hartmann took up again his defence of Central Asia: "The most brilliant names of the spiritual evolution of early Islam—Bukhārī, Samarqandī, Abul-Laith Tirmidhī, etc.—point to the *trapezium* Marv—Samarqand—Herat—Balkh. Especially its eastern part covering Transoxiana and the neighbourhood of the mysterious Badakhshān fructifies ceaselessly and in every respect (unablässig . . . in allen Beziehungen) the western parts of the Islamic world." The Turkish hordes which arrived from the east had certainly no great artistic taste, but they had no prejudice against the representation of living beings, and with them came artists from Uyghuristan, the country where artistic production was still going on, the country of numberless Buddha statues and of a crowd of other pictorial types (bildliche Darstellungen), male and female.

In 1917 Professor Strzygowski[4] joined the discussion and developed the thesis which had been only outlined by Hartmann. Coming back to the figures which are represented on the vases described by Sarre, he thus formulated the question: "Are the human figures occurring in the eastern-islamic art of ancient-oriental and hellenistic, or of Chinese-Indian origin?" By a comparative analysis, in which a considerable rôle is assigned to some statuettes found in the ruins of Afrāsiyāb (near Samarqand),[5] Strzygowski comes to the conclusion

[1] Sarre refers to the inscription on the Sircheli madrasa in Konia, quoted in his *Reise in Kleinasien*, Berlin, 1896, p. 54.

[2] See the inscription on Timur's mausoleum, Sarre, *Denkmäler pers. Baukunst*, fasc. 5.

[3] "Die Tradenten erster Schicht im *Musnad* des Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal," *MSOS*, 1906, ix/2, p. 148.

[4] *Altai-Iran*, Leipzig, 1917, pp. 259–272.

[5] Strzygowski's examples could be now considerably multiplied by objects both from Eastern Turkestan and Afghanistan.

that the "Mesopotamian"[1] vessels have their prerequisite (Voraussetzung) in the Saka-Turkish oases of pre-Islamic time. The patterns of the latter were perpetuated on Perso-Mesopotamian soil by that art of the nomads which forms the subject of the author's *Altai-Iran*.

Soon after, Strzygowski's pupil Diez,[2] following in his master's footsteps, claimed a leading cultural role for Khorasan, this geographical term being taken in the original broad sense and referring to the provinces stretching in the eastern direction down to the Oxus.[3] Khorasan, says Diez, has ever been the melting pot (Tummelplatz) of hordes of peoples. Zoroastrianism and Mithraism spread from Balkh. In Khorasan the decisive battles of the 'Abbāsids were fought. Here the first independent dynasties of the Ṭāhirids, Ṣaffārids, and Sāmānids sprang up. "In Khorasan only absolute strength and worth ever ruled—in a word, the Sword." Here Maḥmūd of Ghaznī inaugurated the series of Muslim conquerors of the world and for the first time accomplished the fusion (Zusammenschweissung) of Iran and India. He was followed up by the Seljuks, Mongols, and Timurids. Under the latter Khorasan reached its cultural zenith. In Khorasan, too, originated nearly all the decisive cultural factors that influenced Muslim Persia. Here and in Transoxiana Persian poetry was born: Firdausī, Nāṣir-i Khusrau, 'Omar Khayyām, Jalāl al-dīn Rūmī, Farīd al-dīn 'Aṭṭār were natives of that province. The four historical cities of Khorasan were important focuses of culture, etc.

Diez's arguments are neither first-hand nor free from misunderstandings[4] and his conclusions somewhat sweeping: "In strange contrast to the scanty consideration which Khorasan has hitherto found in historical studies, stands its extraordinary importance as the centre and the starting-point of the Iranian culture from the most ancient times."[5] It would have been certainly more prudent to limit the first part of the statement to the historical studies of Persian Art only,[6] and to mitigate the exaggeration of the final part as it stands.

[1] The author always uses this attribution in inverted commas.

[2] *Churāsānische Baudenkmäler*, Berlin, 1918, pp. 4–10.

[3] *Khorāsān* means "place where the sun rises".

[4] The Nau-Bihār (*vihāra*) of Balkh was not a Zoroastrian, but a Buddhist, temple.

[5] "Seine ausserordentliche Bedeutung als Zentrum und Ausgangspunkt der iranischen Kultur seit den ältesten Zeiten," *o.c.*, Preface, p. 6.

[6] But we possess the penetrating studies on Khorasan by W. Geiger, Wellhausen, Marquart, and Barthold!

In a richly documented rejoinder [1] E. Herzfeld took exception to the views represented by the Strzygowski school and tried to show the importance of the western provinces of Persia.

It is true that no Achæmenid structure has yet been brought to light east of Hamadān and, as regards the Sasanian monuments, even the Arab geographers [2] were struck by the fact that they do not extend east of the Alvand pass which overlooks Hamadān. But Herzfeld rightly insists on the close connection of the Median and Achæmenid art with the western civilizations (Elam, Babylon, Niniveh, Urarṭu), and further shows that, out of one hundred towns founded by the Sasanians, eighty-four lay in the west.

The only two periods for which Herzfeld acknowledges the leading role of the East are the Hellenistic epoch and that of the Persian Renaissance (from about A.D. 830). He thinks (p. 173) that during the first of the two periods the fructifying effect of Greek art is to be explained by the " virgin soil " which Eastern Iran represented, while during the second, the simplicity of artistic forms [3] presupposes hardly any previous development.

The chief interest of Herzfeld's article lies in its documentary evidence, but as a counter-thesis to that of Diez it is not wholly convincing. Eastern Iran, as we have tried to explain above, ought to be understood in the wider sense of both Khorasan and Transoxiana, and its artistic role should not be limited to architecture alone, though, even in that sphere, the Eastern Iranian monuments of Islamic times occupy a very honourable place.[4] The Herat school of painting (fifteenth century) alone would be of great weight in the scale of Greater Khorasan.

A much more complex historical view is taken by V. V. Barthold in the above-mentioned article, which sums up the arguments of the easterners and westerners.

Barthold lays stress on the role of the East in the formation of the Iranian epics and thinks that the existence of a Buddhist part of Iran had for Muslim culture no less importance than the Sasanian

[1] " Khorasan, Denkmalsgeographische Studien zur Kulturgeschichte des Islams in Iran," *Der Islam*, xi, 1921, pp. 107–174.

[2] Ibn al-Faqīh, p. 229 ; Yāqūt, iv, p. 985. However, both Ibn al-Faqīh and Ibn Rusta mention two Sasanian castles east of Hamadān, *v.i.*, p. 651, n. 4.

[3] Evidently *architectural* forms are meant here.

[4] Here lies the great merit of Diez's book and its supplement : " Persien. Islamische Kunst in Chorasan," 1923. For Transoxiana, see now Kohn-Wiener, *Turan*.

Iran.[1] The equestrian figures on the Arsacid and Sasanian bas-reliefs, unknown under the Achæmenids, find their explanation in the westward movement of such horse-loving peoples as the Parthians and the Saka. Under the Sasanians the great and important town of Nīshāpūr was founded in Khorasan, and Marv was larger than Jayy (the future Isfahān). The ruins discovered in Sīstān by Sir A. Stein [2] and the ossuaries found near Samarqand [3] will be of great weight for the study and interpretation of Sasanian and Greco-Buddhist art. From various sources we hear of the sculptural representation of animals practised in Eastern Iran.[4]

To complete Herzfeld's enumeration of monuments, Barthold quotes the following important fact : near the ruins of Balkh the Arabs built a new town Barūqān, but finally in A.D. 725 rebuilt the old Balkh under the direction of Barmak, an offspring of the former Buddhist priests of Balkh. " Only in the Eastern, Buddhist Iran the culture of the subject race won such a victory over the Arabs as the destruction of the town founded by the Arab victors, in favour of the reconstruction of a pre-Islamic town." Some elements of culture become known much earlier in the East ; in Samarqand, rag-paper was in use in the middle of the eighth century, while it reached Egypt only in the beginning of the tenth century. When the Caliph's new residence Samarrā was built about the middle of the ninth century, specialists were still invited from Egypt to prepare papyri-rolls. On the other hand, if domes (squinches ?) spread from Eastern Iran, tiles were brought to the East from the West.

The decline of Khorasan cannot be explained by the political storms that raged over it : Khorasan particularly flourished immediately after

[1] See Barthold : " Die persische Šu'ūbija und die moderne Wissenschaft " in *Z.f.Assyr.*, xxvi, 1912, p. 260.

[2] See the new explorations in Afghanistān by Godard, Hackin and Bartoux.

[3] They bear " Sasanian " ornaments and Greek heads.

[4] Barthold, *o.c.*, 379. In A.D. 743 the Arab governor of Khorasan (residing in Bukhārā) Naṣr ibn Sayyār gave a command for sending, as presents to the West, vases in gold and silver shaped as antelopes, ibexes, etc., Tabari, ii, 1705. The Bukharan historian Narshakhi (born in A.D. 899) says that in his time at a market in Bukhārā were sold " idols ", i.e. probably clay figures of men and animals. Ibn Ḥauqal (second half of the tenth century), p. 365, saw in the public place of Samarqand " astonishing figures, carved in cypress wood, of animals, such as horses, oxen, camels, and wild beasts ; they stand confronted as if trying to avoid each other or drawing near each other with menacing attitudes ". [As parallels in the West, can be quoted the Sasanian (?) castle Mushkūya (between Rayy and Sāva) where there stood figures of carved wood, Ibn Rusta, p. 168, and the castle of Juhasta, near Hamadān, each corner of which was adorned with figures of young girls, Ibn al-Faqīh, p. 255.]

Timur's invasion. More probably the factor which brought about the ruin of Khorasan was the foundation under Islam of the great towns of Central Persia. In the eighth–ninth centuries the 'Abbāsids rebuilt Rayy and simultaneously Isfahān rose to prominence.

As in all similar phenomena of cultural history, the decline of Khorasan cannot be fitted to a simple chronological date. For a long time Khorasan lacked cultural homogeneity. In the beginning of the fourteenth century, under a Mongol ruler who had formerly been governor of Khorasan, sunnī theologians expanded westwards from that province,[1] while in the same century the old Shī'a centre Sabzavār launched a Shī'a political movement which spread all over Khorasan. By the time of Timur and his successors no signs of eastern influence can be discovered on western architecture, while in the East the builders were natives of the western cities, Isfahan, Shiraz, and Tabriz. Only in painting were there perhaps instances of an Eastern influence: it is reported that this art was introduced into Turkey under the sultan Bāyazīd II (1481–1512) by a native of Turkestan Bābā Naqqāsh.[2]

Barthold admits that in the present state of our knowledge much in the cultural interdependence of the Eastern and Western Iran remains obscure. "But even now we may say that the one-sided and often arbitrary theories of Strzygowski and his school on the one hand, and on the other the artificial simplicity and lucidity of Herzfeld will prove to be equally inconsistent. As a result of future studies, we may foresee a very complex picture full of seeming contradictions, which will not be removed except by a careful and thorough examination not only of the bulk of the cultural evolution but of each of its manifestations. There is no doubt a grain of truth, but only a very small one, in M. Hartmann's opinion that plunging into minute details hampers the comprehension of the fundamental traits of phenomena and of their mutual dependence, instead of contributing thereto. But in all the branches of Oriental studies, including Oriental Art, superficial dilettantism and foregone conclusions will long remain incomparably more dangerous than a partiality for seemingly unimportant details."

[1] Barthold refers to the ḥanafī theologians who arrived in Āzarbāyjān under the ægis of Öljeytü, see his review of Blochet's "Introduction à l'histoire des Mongols" in *Mir Islama*, 1912, i/1, p. 101.

[2] Evliyā chelebi, vi, 152.